



March 27, 2025

Let's Talk Tuesday Webinars - Spring Schedule

DESE, Food and Nutrition Services staff will be hosting several Let's Talk Tuesdays this spring! **ALL webinars will be from 2-3pm CST.**

An email will be sent out the morning prior of each webinar to each LEAs Authorized Representative and Food Service Director on file. The email will include the link required to access the webinar. As always, the webinar will be recorded and posted on our **trainings page** at a later date for those that are not able to attend the live release. Please feel free to forward the email with the link to additional food service employees or staff that would like to attend the webinars.

LET'S TALK TUESDAY

Spring Webinar Schedule - Tuesdays from 2-3pm CST

MAR
18

Local Food for Schools (LFS) for Farm to School

- Overview of LFS funds and how to apply
- Success Stories

MAR
25

Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) & Food Service Management Contracts (FSMC)

- CEP Eligibility & April 1st Data
- Completing the CEP Dashboard & CEP Deadlines
- FSMC Renewals, Monitoring and RFPs

APR
1

Summer SuN Bucks - EBT

- Overview of Summer 2025 EBT
- Eligible Students
- Data Collection

APR
8

Procurement Town Hall

- Bid Season Reminders and Tips
- Food Service Procurement Plans
- Buy American updates
- Forecast and Communicate
- Net Off Invoice (NOI) Distribution

APR
15

Seamless Summer Option (SSO)

- SSO Application
- Site Eligibility
- Non-congregate

APR
22

School Year 2025-26 Meal Pattern Changes

- Meal Pattern Changes
- Kitchen Records

APR
29

Town Hall

- Open Questions
- End of Year Reminders
- Summer Workshops



Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Reminders

The **Final Rule** published on September 26, 2023, lowered the minimum identified student percentage required to elect CEP from 40% to 25%. This creates a greater flexibility to offer no-cost meals to all enrolled students if financially viable to the school district.

LEAs interested in electing Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) for some or all schools must prepare data on the number of identified students eligible for free meals based on Direct Certification (including Homeless, Foster, and Extended Eligible) and enrollment data as of April 1 to determine eligibility and participate in CEP.

Schools should make these following considerations:

- CEP does remove administrative burdens such as distributing and approving free or reduced-price applications, verifying applications, collecting lunch money from students and counting meals by eligibility
- If the ISP does not yield 100 percent free claiming percentage then it is very essential to ensure financial viability to cover the difference in meals not able to be claimed at the free rate
- FRL percentages used for formula calculation
- LEAs should use the **CEP calculator** tool to determine the financial impact

Contact Food and Nutrition Services by phone or email:

Debbie Harrison: 573-751-7664

Main Phone: 573-751-8673

Email: Debbie.Harrison@dese.mo.gov

SNP Financial Report Reminder

Please ensure your SY 23-24 Financial Report is approved or has been submitted.

Our office is working on approving these reports. School food authorities shall maintain a nonprofit school food service account. Revenues received by the nonprofit school food service are to be used only for the operation or improvement of such food service. Expenditures of nonprofit school food service revenues shall be in accordance with the financial management system established by the State Agency. Schools participating in the National School Lunch Programs are required to submit forms and reports to demonstrate compliance with Program requirements. When all SNP financial reports from each LEA have been submitted, reviewed and approved, the data is used to analyze Statewide participation and cost.

- The School Nutrition Program Financial Report assists in the monitoring of the Local Education Agency's (LEA) compliance with the financial management requirements as set by Federal regulation (7 CFR 210.14) for the school meals programs.
 - The SNP financial report was due in the DESE Web Applications system November 1.
 - Finance Reporting and additional resources for Food and Nutrition Services can be found on our **Guidance & Resources** page
 - **Financial Report Definitions**
 - **ASBR Mapping Resources**
 - **Financial Report Instructions**
- **Schools that contract with a Food Service Management Company (FSMC)-** *must* breakout the expenses in Part 1 number 3 *Expenditure for Reporting Period*. The expenditures include food, salaries, employee benefits, purchased services, equipment purchases and supplies. The LEA must request expenditure details from the FSMC to complete the financial report.
- **Adjustment to balance-** Adjustment to Balance is used if necessary to amend the closing balance. This can be done per an audit, to report funds moved from a general (non-federal) source into the nonprofit food service fund (+), to report repayment of a loan, or to recover indirect cost (-) from the account.
- **Indirect Cost Rate-** the allowable percentage of Indirect Cost that can be recovered from the nonprofit food service fund is found on number 10 of the financial report. You can review the **Indirect Cost memo** posted here along with the **Indirect Cost Guidance**

- **Excess Balance-** Your Food Service Account is a “non-profit” account- you are allowed to carry a three month average operating cost.
 - For example: We calculate an excess balance by taking your closing balance (\$411,211.15) and subtracting the three month balance (\$225,968.28). This gives you the excess that you need to “spend down”. For compliance, we ask that you send us a written (on district letter head) plan on how you will spend the balance down.
 - To bring the balance in line with program requirements, we suggest immediate consideration of one or more of the following: (1) improve the quality of food offered; (2) purchase needed movable equipment items and supplies; (3) pay expenses for food service personnel to attend workshops, conferences, or trainings; and (4) to achieve compliance with the Healthy Hunger Kids Free Act you may not arbitrarily divert funds accumulated in your food service operation; however, you may consider indirect cost recovery. (5) Paid Lunch Equity Exemption
 - If your LEA has an excess balance, our office will send the authorized representative a notification letter and the LEA will need to submit the written response/plan for reducing the program balance and the estimated date of completion. After the excess balance is depleted, the LEA must submit detailed documentation explaining steps used to reduce expenditure with the amounts expended and all receipts if applicable.

Important School Nutrition Requirements and Resources

Revised Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs

The **Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs** (FBG) has been revised to reflect the final rule, “Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent With the 2020–2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans”. This important resource assists CNP operators, food manufacturers, and other stakeholders with purchasing the correct amounts of foods for CNP and determining the contribution that each food makes toward meal pattern requirements. The FBG is available as a Web Tool, Mobile App, and downloadable PDF.

Language Access Training Materials

The USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), Civil Rights Division (CRD), recently announced that the language access webinar and slides, focused on “**How to Bridge Language and Cultural Barriers with FNS support**” have been published! This training is specifically designed to guide FNS funded programs in better serving the needs of the communities they support. It presents valuable strategies for overcoming language barriers, leveraging the FNS language access framework, and provides practical tips to navigate common challenges in multilingual environments.

You can view both the recorded training and the PowerPoint slides by following this link: [**Language Access Training | Food and Nutrition Service**](#)

Updated! Offering Meats and Meat Alternates at School Breakfast Training Guide

Team Nutrition’s “Offering Meats and Meat Alternates at School Breakfast” training guide has been updated to be consistent with the Final Rule, “**Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent**



With the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans."

The Final Rule allows schools the option to offer grains, meats/meat alternates, or a combination of both at breakfast. **This 20-page training guide** shows school nutrition professionals how to offer meats and meat alternates at school breakfast by providing menu planning ideas, crediting information, sample menus, and more.

View in Spanish | Ve en español

Farm to School

Local Food for Schools (LFS) Grant

The LFS grant was **NOT** impacted by the federal termination of grant programs. DESE **will continue** to operate and distribute funds for this current LFS grant. DESE **will not** be receiving Local Food for Schools and Child Care (LFSCC), this grant was terminated. These are two separate grants.

Please review our recent **Let's Talk Tuesday Webinar on LFS** for additional information and how to apply for available funding.

How to Apply:

1. Review the training recording.
2. Complete the request for applications.
3. Submit written plan describing how you will spend the funds.

Scan the QR code to get started!



MO DESE Food & Nutrition Services
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Reminders and Important Information

Local Education Agency(LEA) rebid for Food Service Management Company(FSMC)

LEA's must rebid for a FSMC every five (5) years according to USDA regulations. There is a list of LEA's who need to start the process at **FSMC Contract Rebid List 25-26 School Year | Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education**. Several LEA's have begun the process and are in the bidding process. This requirement is for any LEA wanting to rebid the use of FSMC's. To begin the process, you must contact **Kyle Heislen** for a copy of the State approved RFP.

- FSMC Training Resources:

- **Food Service Management Company Contracts - YouTube**
- **DESE, FNS Trainings Page**
- FSMC Contract Monitoring is required to be submitted with a **signed renewal form**.

Reminders:

- LEA's must use the state approved RFP as it has all the USDA requirements.
- DESE must approve the RFP and advertisement prior to the advertisement being sent out.
- The RFP must be out for a minimum of 45 days (USDA prefers 60 days).
- LEA's must evaluate the RFP and justify the one they wish to go with.
- LEA's then send DESE the RFP to get State approval PRIOR to any signatures.

We will be individually contacting the LEA's who need to rebid but wanted to get this out as a reminder as well. Please contact Kyle Heislen with any questions or requests - Kyle.heislen@dese.mo.gov or 573-522-9849.

Seamless Summer Option (SSO)

Children need proper nutrition, all year long. Summer meal programs such as the Seamless Summer Option (SSO) make it possible for families to have access to meals after the regular school year ends.

Our DESE, FNS office is currently updating SSO resources and documents. We will have them available on our website and in the next newsletter soon!

School Lunch Hero Day - May 2, 2025 - Save the Date!

School Lunch Hero Day, May 2, 2025, is the day to recognize the efforts your team shows every day to provide healthy meals to students— not only preparing food but also serving it with a smile and kind words, encouraging children to try new things and get all the nutrients their growing bodies need.

Visit the [SNA website](#) to explore additional resources, including creative craft ideas, classroom activities, and tools to help spread the word in your school and community.

USDA Foods Update



Gold Star Live Inventory End-of-Year Deliveries

As a friendly reminder, all Direct Delivery (Brown Box) and Fee For Service foods that have been processed for the 24/25 school year, must be received during the 24/25 school year. **Any items that were on your packet through February will be automatically shipped in March. April is our last scheduled warehouse delivery month, so product remaining in your Gold Star account will automatically be shipped to you in April if you do not place it on your Gold Star order.** Please plan your March and April deliveries to ensure you will be able to accept all items you have left in your inventory.

Advertising Direct Delivery Foods

School districts that have Direct Delivery (Brown Box) items that they would like to advertise to others as bonus may do so through **March 21st**. School districts will not be allowed to post advertisements after this time so that Gold Star is able to deliver these items in April. All districts will be responsible for accepting foods that remain in their accounts at that time.

Any advertised items that are not taken by March 23rd will be the responsibility of the advertising district.

DoD Fresh

As of January 5, 2025, customers are required to receipt FFAVORS orders **within 2 business days** of delivery (previously 5 business days) before a receipt is considered past due. As before, if past due receipts exist, ordering will be locked until past due receipts are processed.

If you have any school closings (such as due to bad weather or holidays), please remember to communicate (such as closings due to holidays or inclement weather) that will affect deliveries to C&C Produce via email Jackie@ccproduce.com or text 816-304-7425.

Net Off Invoice Pounds

We are now into March and districts that have processed Net Off Invoice should have utilized more than 75% of pounds processed. Districts that have not reached this level of use will be receiving an inquiry from your processors asking if you have a plan to utilize your remaining pounds before the end of the school year.

Districts with a plan may keep their pounds and continue to draw them down. Districts that do not respond to the processors or that do not have a plan may have their pounds swept into the state account to take them to the 65% usage level.

NOI Bonus – Bonus entitlement is still available. Please reach out to each processor for specific information on pounds available.



Commodities Expo

Thank you to all those who attended our commodities expos this year! If you attended, we'd love your feedback to help us have a great event next year.

- **Kansas City Expo – Event Feedback Survey**
- **St. Louis Expo – Event Feedback Survey**

Certificates were emailed to those who were in attendance. If you did not receive your certificate, please reach out to Ellen Rees at ellen.rees@dese.mo.gov.

Training

We know quite a few of you were not able to attend due to weather or other reasons. Training materials are available online:

- The Commodities 101 webinar was recorded and is now posted on the **USDA Foods page** under Training Videos and on the **Trainings page** under Let's Talk Tuesday
- The 2025 Food Expo Presentation slides from the General USDA Foods Session are posted on the **USDA Foods page** under the Resources section
- The January 21 USDA Foods: Unwrapping the Packet webinar is posted on the **Trainings page** under Let's Talk Tuesday



25/26 USDA Foods Packet

The USDA Foods packet was due on March 1. If you did not receive confirmation that we received and processed your packet, please let us know as soon as possible at donatedfoods@dese.mo.gov.

Past Newsletters

Missed a past newsletter or need to access them again? You can find them all on our Food and Nutrition Services Newsletter page!



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